



People from Merak & Sakteng



Joseph Singh, owner of Dzongkhar Animal Park, with a tiger



At Phobjikha, Bhutan



destruction of their natural habitats and reducing threats to their survival. Recent biological surveys conducted in some of the biological corridors found a mammal species Northern Tree Shrew, considered extinct. As many as 5-10 species are expected to be found in future surveys.

WWF also recently helped the government join the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). As a result of WWF's help, anti-poaching activities have been strengthened through awareness workshops and study tours for local communities as well as park staff. WWF is also helping with the development of the National Anti-Poaching Strategy. The Tiger Conservation Program was also developed based on WWF surveys and studies. Bhutan is presently home to a stable and viable population of 115-150 tigers including 67-81 breeding tigers.

Creating local partnerships for community development:

WWF Bhutan recognizes that communities must be given alternative livelihood opportunities if they are to reduce their dependence on forests and other natural resources. WWF Bhutan developed a National Ecotourism Strategy in consultation with the Department of Tourism and the Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators. The Strategy shares tourism revenues between tour operators and local communities. The Women in Environment Project designed by WWF in partnership with the local organization Yungkhued Meser Thrunzel improved the economic conditions of the women in a small village in eastern Bhutan. Activities include pasture development, social forestry, vegetable

Phobjikha valley in partnership with the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature.

Environmental Education and Awareness:

WWF Bhutan is helping build the next generation of conservationists by supporting scholarships for rural communities and international fellowships for conservation professionals. WWF also supports the training of professionals in the legal and socio-economic aspects of conservation and supports the government's efforts to integrate environmental education in the national curriculum through the development of a National Environmental Education Strategy. Along with RSPN, WWF has established nature clubs in schools around Bhutan, and, working with the National Women's Association in Bhutan, has provided scholarships for the young girls as a means of empowering women in Bhutan.

A Bright Future:

WWF Bhutan's projects are multifaceted and all emphasize research and monitoring, wildlife preservation, conservation education, gender equality, sustainable livelihoods and the improvement of social welfare of communities in and around protected areas. WWF Bhutan recognizes that the future of conservation in Bhutan lies in the hands of the Bhutanese people and that the integration of the local communities for conservation initiatives is key to ensuring that Bhutan's world-class wildlife and habitats remain for future generations.



WWF BHUTAN PROGRAM

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WWF Bhutan Program

Conservation Success in the Eastern Himalayas

An Extraordinary Diversity of Life:

Wedged between China and India, the tiny Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan possesses extraordinary and largely untouched biological wealth. A spectacular diversity of species results from the country's wide altitude range, moist climate and position at the junction of two major bioregions — the Temperate Palaearctic and tropical Indo-Malayan. More than 160 kinds of mammals can be found, including the snow leopard, Himalayan musk deer, tiger, blue sheep, takin (the national animal of Bhutan), greater one-horned rhinoceros and golden langur, a rare primate seen nowhere else.

Even more extensive are the 770 bird species, including the highly endangered white-bellied heron, the black-necked crane, wreathed hornbill, spotted wren-babbler and Tibetan sandprouse. The country also hosts 5,500 plant species, many with medicinal values and many found nowhere else on Earth. Unlike much of the region, which suffers from high deforestation and environmental degradation, Bhutan has more than 72 percent of its land under forest cover. Under the progressive leadership of His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the government has pledged to protect 60 percent of its forests at all times.

The WWF Bhutan Program Office was formally established in 1992 in the capital of Thimphu. However,

WWF's assistance to Bhutan can be traced back to 1977 when it began helping the government build its conservation capacity. Since the establishment of the country program office, WWF Bhutan has played an essential role in developing an integrated and collaborative conservation program focused on immediate as well as long-term conservation needs. WWF's activities include helping the government develop forestry legislation and protected areas management plans, support for species monitoring activities, education and awareness programs, promotion of ecotourism, and capacity building.

WWF Bhutan was instrumental in launching the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation – the first of its kind in the world. WWF Bhutan has also been actively involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects to promote biodiversity conservation by balancing the needs of local communities with the natural environment.

WWF worked with the government to develop one of the world's most ambitious conservation programs – the Bhutan Biological Conservation Complex (B2C2) – a network of protected areas and biological corridors covering 35 percent of the country. Under this program, tigers, leopards and other species will freely migrate between protected areas, spreading their genes and local communities will thrive through innovative conservation and development programs..

Focused Programs:

WWF Bhutan focuses its efforts around three broad national priorities:

- Address national, ecoregional and global threats to the long-term integrity of forest and freshwater ecosystems;
- Develop sustainable rural livelihood opportunities to alleviate population pressures on natural resources..

- Help increase awareness and understanding of the threats to natural resources to promote sustainability of nature and natural resources during development

The programs are based within four programmatic themes of: forests and freshwater, species, sustainable livelihoods, and environmental education and communications.

Creating Linkages: Protected Areas and Biological Corridors:

WWF Bhutan has actively supported the Royal Government of Bhutan's revision of its protected areas system since 1993, culminating in the visionary B2C2 program. WWF Bhutan has been spearheading the development and implementation of management plans for the protected areas and the biological corridors. Pilot projects on alternative energy have also been implemented in and around the protected areas.

Protecting Endangered Wildlife:

Bhutan is home to more than 60 mammals, many of which, like the tiger and the snow leopard are endangered. WWF Bhutan is committed to the protection of these animals by preventing



Blue Sheep



Black Necked Cranes



Urei Sunibang, under TNP

Alpine forest

Temperate forest towards the southern belt